

Shadowing Guide – Foster Care Family Team Meetings

Objectives:

1. Events that require an FTM
2. What was required before the FTM
3. What transpired during the FTM
4. What was the outcome after the FTM

What is an FTM?

Family Team Meetings are utilized to engage families in safety planning, case planning, service identification and assessing progress. Family Team Meetings are voluntary for the family; they must be offered and encouraged throughout the life of a case. Family Team Meetings is an inquiry-driven learning process; Is conducted by a family's service team; Forms a big picture understanding of the family; Informs family-team decisions; Guides a change process; Achieves necessary conditions for safe case closure.

Strength Based:

Means that we will recognize and emphasize the family's strengths. The focus is to identify strengths from the family, supportive groups and communities that will be utilized to solve the problem to crises that brought the child into care.

Child Centered:

Promotes and emphasizes the need to actively encourage that safety and health of the child thus, ensuring the well-being of the youth. Promoting the youth's right to make and maintain connections, while, asking questions and searching for answers.

Family Focused:

It emphasizes family relationships as an important factor in maintaining permanency, identifying strengths and overcoming concerns. The Family Focused skills begin with treating the family with respect and dignity. Having their strengths acknowledged will empower them to participate in services.

FTM Types:

CPS

CPS Case Opening
Updated Service Plan and Closure
Court Intervention
Request by Family

Foster Care

Case Plan Development (ISP)
Case Services Plan Reassessment (USP/PWSP)
Child in Care for 6 Months
Change in Placement Goal

Placement Preservation/Placement Interruption

Caseworker, Foster Parent, or Residential Request
Mental Health Hospitalization
AWOLP

Case Closure
Reunification

16 + Semi-Annual Transition Meeting

Once a youth turns age 16. DHS-901 must be completed and goals discussed

90 Day Discharge

For any youth 16 or older regarding discharge of wardship

Request by Family

The FTM Process

Pre-meeting Discussion: Engagement and Prep-work

Facilitator engages family and prep-work is done with parents regarding purpose of meeting; gathering family's story; asking the family who they want invited to meeting; discussion of non-negotiable(s); asks what family would like to accomplish at the meeting. Family will be asked to suggest ground rules they feel may be necessary in the meeting. Family-friendly meeting time and place is set. Discuss location options (Safety First!). If family's home is ruled out, provide an explanation to the family as to why the home environment is un-conducive for holding the meeting.

Stages of the Family Team Meeting:

Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome family and team members; family introduces themselves, or meeting facilitator introduces the family (family ritual may be used to start meeting). Roles and responsibilities are explained to the FTM team members.
- Discuss purposes for meeting and FTM philosophy [family may present purpose; consensus of all team members is essential].
- Discuss non-negotiable(s) (policy, procedures and court orders) and confidentiality
- Develop ground rules- agreed upon by all. Some Ground Rules may be developed during prep-meeting.
- Family tells their story of why they have become involved with DHS.
- Define Outcomes for the family-[Outcomes and Behavioral Results desired. Family speaks first, followed by all members
- Explain Charting

Identification of Strengths and Needs/Concerns

- Discuss strengths to achieve outcomes. Family speaks first, followed by all members.
- Discuss concerns and needs related to outcomes. Family speaks first, followed by all members.
- Discuss supports to achieve outcomes. Family speaks first, followed by all members.

Brainstorming Ideas

- Link ideas to Safety /Risk.
- Discuss strengths and supports to assist in reaching goals.

Plan Development

- Develop plan
- Action Steps: what, who is responsible, by when; and Safety Plan: Assess “What can go wrong”, and create transitional plan as needed.

Recap and Closing

- Discuss next steps and closing [all come to Agreement]

The shadowing guide gives you an opportunity to experience what happens at an FTM and to give you an opportunity to observe parents, extended family members, children (if appropriate), and child welfare staff to meet and discuss concerns related to the child(ren)'s safety and placement

Please read over questions BEFORE you observe a Family Team Meeting

Observation date: _____

FTM Facilitator: _____

Before the FTM

Did the facilitator have a pre-meeting discussion to engage family in preparing for the meeting?

Family Team Meeting Preparation Tool

Did the facilitator/case manager use the **DHS 1108** Family Team Meeting Preparation Tool?

Involve the parents

Did the facilitator involve the family in deciding what would be accomplished in the meeting?

Were parents encouraged to identify and invite support persons?

Did the facilitator answer questions the parent might have regarding the FTM process?

Did the facilitator ensure the parents know day, time and location and have transportation?

Ensure that the non-custodial parents are invited? (incarcerated, absent, etc.)

Did the facilitator get the families input on ground rules?

Did the facilitator/case-manager get the family's input as to who should attend the meeting?

Anticipate special needs of participants

Were reasonable accommodations provided to eliminate potential barriers, eg. transportation, child care, deaf/hard of hearing, interpreter, foreign language translator, phone access for incarcerated parents, wheelchair access, etc.?

During the FTM

General facilitator observations:

Demonstrate professional behavior

Did the Facilitator/case-manager listen to understand, speak honestly and sincerely to all participants?

Was there good eye contact (as culturally appropriate)?

Did the Facilitator/case manager encourage others to share their perspectives, opinions and ideas?

Speak to be understood

Did the Facilitator/case-manager refrain from using acronyms and DHS jargon?

Did the Facilitator/case manager elaborate clearly and rephrase as needed?

Did the Facilitator/case-manager check for understanding?

Be sensitive to participants and issues

Was child (ren) present?

Did the facilitator/case manager remain conscious of their well-being and promoting a safe, protective environment?

Did the facilitator/case manager validate feelings and emotions of participants?

Did the facilitator/case manager demonstrate commitment to assist the family to safely provide for their children?

Stages of the Meeting

Welcome and Introduction

Did the facilitator involve the family in introducing the purpose, ground rules, and understanding the FTM process?

Was someone assigned to do the “charting”?

Identification of Strengths and Needs

Was the family involved in identification of strengths and needs as well as supports to achieve outcomes?

Brainstorming Ideas

Was there an open discussion about ideas to resolve the needs?

Plan Development

Was a plan identified that involved action steps, time frames, and “who is responsible”?

Recap and Closing

Was there discussion of the next steps, a summary of what was accomplished, and check in to see if everybody is clear about what occurred?

After the FTM

Required Documentation

- Charting
- Family Team Meeting Activity Report DHS-1105
- Family Team Meeting Attendance Report DHS-1107
- JJOLT - FTM documented within 7 business days of meeting
- SWSS - FTM documented within 5 business days of meeting

FTM Follow-up

Was there any follow-up necessary for the facilitator/case manager?